

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 314 058

IR 052 987

AUTHOR Gentz, William H.
TITLE The Bible in Church and Synagogue Libraries. CSLA
Guide No. 16.
INSTITUTION Church and Synagogue Library Association, Portland,
OR.
REPORT NO ISBN-C-915324-27-X
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 29p.; Two-page chart will not reproduce legibly.
AVAILABLE FROM Church and Synagogue Library Association, P.O. Box
19357, Portland, OR 97219.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Biblical Literature; *Library Collections; *Library
Services; *Religious Education; *Special Libraries
IDENTIFIERS *Church Libraries; *Synagogue Libraries

ABSTRACT

The first chapter of this guide, which is intended to help congregational librarians find ways to use the Bible in their programs, provides background on the books and themes of the Bible. Various versions of the English Bible are discussed in the second chapter, and suggestions for studying the Bible and a Bible reading plan are offered in the third. Library tools for Bible study--concordances, dictionaries, commentaries, books about the Bible, and other resources--are described in the fourth chapter, and the fifth covers Bible societies and organizations as well as Bible study opportunities. The final chapter suggests several ways to promote use of the Bible: (1) supplementary materials; (2) exhibits and displays; (3) National Bible Week; (4) Bible materials for distribution; (5) non-book materials for the library; (6) planting a Biblical garden; and (7) Bibles for the reading-impaired. The guide concludes with quotations on the Bible from three prominent religious leaders. (MES)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

□ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

CSLA Guide No. 16

THE BIBLE IN CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES

William H. Gentz

A Church and Synagogue Library
Association Publication

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Lorraine E. Burson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION was formed in 1967 to provide educational guidance in the establishment and maintenance of congregational library service.

The organization issues publications relating to this branch of librarianship, including *Church and Synagogue Libraries*, a bi-monthly bulletin containing news and informative articles for members and subscribers.

Membership in the non-profit association is open to all who are interested in church or synagogue libraries. Provision is made for membership in the name of an individual, church or synagogue, or institution. There are also affiliated, contributing, and honorary membership categories.

For a brochure with further information, and a sample copy of the official bulletin, write CSLA at Post Office Box 19357, Portland, OR 97219.

THE BIBLE IN CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES

William H. Gentz

CSLA Guide No. 16

**CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 19357, Portland, OR 97219**

About the Author

William H. Gentz, an ordained Lutheran minister, has been involved in church library work for more than 30 years. He is one of the founders of the Lutheran Church Library Association, served as national president of the Church and Synagogue Library Association and edited its bulletin for 10 years. His career has been primarily as a book editor at five publishers. He is the author or editor of five books of his own. He has also served as the pastor of churches in Wisconsin, California, Oregon and Brooklyn, New York. He was instrumental in establishing two local church libraries. He lives in New York City.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Gentz, William H., 1918-
The Bible in church and synagogue libraries

(CSLA guide; No. 16)

Bibliography

1. Libraries, church. 2. Synagogue libraries. 3. Libraries—
Special Collections—Bible. 4. Bible—Bibliography.
5. Bible—Study. I. Title. II. Series.

Z675.C5G45 1989

027.6'7—dc20

89-7120

ISBN 0-915324-27-X

ISBN 0-915324-27-X

Copyright 1989, Church and Synagogue Library Association

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

Introduction	4
1. What is the Bible?	5
God Has Spoken: God Speaks...The Bible is a Library...Books of the Bible Classified...Themes of the Bible.	
2. Versions of the English Bible	8
The Purposes of Bible Translation ... Early English Bible Translations ... Major English Translations and Versions ... Other Versions ... Special Editions of the Bible.	
3. Reading and Studying the Bible	14
Understanding the Bible's Message ... Reading the Bible for Meaning ... How to Enjoy Reading the Bible ... A Bible Reading Plan ... Where Do I Find It in the Bible? ... Great Chapters of the Bible.	
4. Library Tools for Bible Study	19
Concordances ... Dictionaries ... Commentaries... Other Helpful Books ... Books About the Bible	
5. Other Bible Resources	21
Bible Societies and Organizations: American Bible Society, International Bible Society, Laymen's National Bible Associations... Opportunities for Bible Study: Walk Through the Bible Ministries, Bethel Bible Series, Neighborhood Bible Studies...Bible Collections and Exhibits.	
6. Promoting Use of the Bible	23
Supplementary Materials...Exhibits and Displays ...National Bible Week...Bible Materials for Distribution...Non-Book Bible Materials for the Library...Planting a Biblical Garden...Bibles for the Reading Impaired.	
A Final Word	25

Introduction

Should synagogue or church libraries be concerned with the Bible? Most congregational librarians would answer immediately, "Of course!" Yet comparatively few libraries have concentrated on having actual Bibles in the library or on finding ways to promote the use and study of the Bible through their facilities.

Most libraries have some books about the Bible on their shelves. Most also have some copies of the Bible cataloged in their holdings. But even though both Jews and Christians revere the Bible as *the* Book as far as their faith is concerned, the Bible itself has not been a major book in their libraries.

This Guide has been planned to help congregational librarians find ways to *use* the Bible in their programs. In their statements of purpose, most libraries say they are established to assist in the educational and worship programs of their congregations. Certainly Bible reading and study is a major part of this program and one that the library should be adequately prepared to promote through its facilities.

We are indebted to many groups and organizations for the background materials supplied for this Guide. Especially are we indebted to the Laymen's National Bible Association for permission to use much of the text in their booklet, *The Bible, Read It for Yourself*, also written by William Gentz, as the basic text of this publication.

1. What is the Bible

God Has Spoken: God Speaks

"Is there any word from the Lord?" is a question God's people asked centuries ago.

The same question is still being asked today. Granted there is a God, where can we find out about Him? Do we have some word from Him and about us and our relationship to Him?

Jews and Christians have always answered these questions with a resounding "Yes!" God has spoken. He speaks today. His word is contained in a book which in its longest versions runs to some 1,500 pages — a million words — variously referred to as the Bible, the Word of God, the Scriptures. Note that all of these titles are preceded by a definite article. It is *the* book. There is something different about this book from all other books. It is in a class by itself in the opinion of those who know it as "the Word from the Lord."

Because the Bible is the world's foremost book on religion, it is sometimes called "The Book of Life." Or, because it is the world's oldest book in common use and the all-time best seller, it is often characterized as "The Book of Books." Several years ago a renowned biblical scholar said that the Bible is "the most exciting book in the world. It looks at life frankly; glosses over nothing; and in page after page, reads as if it were written yesterday." He went on to describe it as being "a most useful work; modern, and vibrantly alive for every generation."

The Bible is a Library

First we note that the Bible is really not just one book. It is a collection of books, a library of books written over many years by many different authors. Some of the books are history, some are poetry, some are symbolic writings, some are collections of stories. There is great variety among these books and at first glance little continuity.

The books of the Bible are divided into two sections: The Old Testament (the Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament. Since we have no original manuscripts today, there is no way to date the books exactly. Undoubtedly, the books which comprise the Bible were written over a period of some 1,500 years and their oral counterparts go back much earlier to the time of Abraham, about 2,000 B.C. The latest book included in the Bible was written probably somewhere around 100 A.D.

The Old Testament is largely an account of the acts of God in choosing and working with a special people—the descendants of Abraham, the Jews. There are some differences of order in various versions of the Bible, but most begin with the books of the Law (Torah), a preface to the history of the nation of Israel which introduces fundamental theological concepts. Then come the books of history which tell the story of God's people as a nation. A large portion of the Old Testament is made up of books written about and by the prophets. They were leaders whom God raised up from time to time to call the people back to their main purpose. It is in these books (the Prophets) that we find the most explicit promises of the Messiah which Christians believe are fulfilled in the New Testament. The rest of the Old Testament is made up of the books of poetry and wisdom (the Writings) such as the Psalms and Proverbs. This is literature of devotion and reflection.

There is a gap of 300 years between the Testaments, from the time of the return of the Jews to their homeland to the birth of Christ. Much of the history and thought of this period of time is contained in books which are considered by many as not being as inspired as the rest of the Bible—often called the *Apocrypha* or extra-canonical books. They are not found in all Bibles. However, these are generally included in Roman Catholic versions of the Bible and in many other modern versions because of their historical significance.

The New Testament begins with the four Gospels which tell the story of the life of Jesus Christ from four different points of view. Then comes the Acts of the Apostles, the New Testament's only history book. It begins with the Ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the beginnings of the Christian Church in the first century. Much of the rest

of the New Testament is concerned with the thought and work of one man, the Apostle Paul, the first great missionary who traveled about establishing churches in Asia Minor and Europe. Many of the books are his letters, written to these churches or to individuals in these "communities of believers." Many of the letters (Epistles) are attributed to other authors as well. The New Testament ends with the Book of Revelation, a symbolic work similar to the writings of some of the later prophets of the Old Testament.

In total, the Bible is an impressive library showing the infinite variety of ways in which God's people have understood their relationship to Him. Because it is such a varied collection of history, letters, stories, drama, poetry, memoirs, and prophecies, many people who try to read it from beginning to end are disappointed and confused. Therefore it is important to understand the background and purpose of each of the books of the Bible and how it relates to the whole.

Books of the Bible Classified

The Old Testament Books:

HISTORIES

The Torah	I Samuel
Genesis	II Samuel
Exodus	I Kings
Leviticus	II Kings
Numbers	I Chronicles
Deuteronomy	II Chronicles
	Ezra
Joshua	Nehemiah
Judges	Esther
Ruth	

PROPHECY

Isaiah	Jonah
Jeremiah	Micah
Lamentations	Nahum
Ezekiel	Habakkuk
Daniel	Zephaniah
Hosea	Haggai
Joel	Zechariah
Amos	Malachi
Obadiah	

POETRY

Job	Ecclesiastes
Psalms	Song of Solomon
Proverbs	

The New Testament Books:

GOSPELS

(Biography)

Matthew	Luke
Mark	John

ACTS

(History)

Acts of the Apostles

EPISTLES

(Letters)

Romans	I Thessalonians	James
I Corinthians	II Thessalonians	I Peter
II Corinthians	I Timothy	II Peter
Galatians	II Timothy	I John
Ephesians	Titus	II John
Philippians	Philemon	III John
Colossians	Hebrews	Jude

REVELATION

(Prophecy)

Revelation

Books of the Apocrypha

The First Book of Esdras
 The Second Book of Esdras
 Tobit
 Judith
 The Additions to the Book of Esther
 The Wisdom of Solomon
 Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus
 the Son of Sirach
 Baruch
 The Letter of Jeremiah
 the Prayer of Azariah and the
 Song of the Three Young Men
 Susanna
 Bel and the Dragon
 The Prayer of Manasseh
 The First Book of the Maccabees
 The Second Book of the Maccabees

Themes of the Bible

The Bible is made up of books from various backgrounds written by a variety of authors over a long period of time, but as we look more closely we see there are central themes running through all of them which help us understand the Bible's message for us today.

God's Story

It is important to bear in mind that the Bible is primarily a book of religion. It tells of events but it interprets these events in the light of God's action within them. It is not a textbook of science, astronomy, or geography, although it deals with these subjects and many more. And, although it contains history, it is not primarily a history book. It is first and foremost a book which confronts men and women with God.

The Bible begins with God, who existed before time and is seen first in His creative acts; then in His choosing and working with a people and eventually a nation; then, as Christians believe, in the culmination of His acts in the person of His Son, Jesus the Messiah, and in the events immediately following His life on earth and leading on into eternity.

Seeing the Bible in this light as primarily theological — dealing with God — and as revelation — revealing the nature of God as well as His purpose — one begins to see many themes running through all of Scripture. One of these themes is that God reveals Himself to people and desires their fellowship. He reveals himself through history but also through persons in the Bible.

Salvation

Another theme that comes through in both Testaments is that God shows Himself as compassionate and saving. He brought Israel out of the bondage of Egypt to the Promised Land, and He has compassion for all people who are caught up in the harsher bondage of sin. The saving character of God is revealed in His care for the people of Israel, through the prophets, and for Christians, in the life, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Covenant

Another theme can be seen in terms of a covenant or promise that God makes to people and their responses.

When the people of Israel were saved from Egypt, they went to Mount Sinai and there pledged themselves in a covenant with their God who had saved them. For Christians there is a variation of this same theme in the New Testament where Jesus Christ accepts the cross and becomes their means of salvation, prompting those who believe in Him to pledge themselves in a new covenant with Him.

Law and Gospel

There is another theme of Scripture which was emphasized in the Reformation in the sixteenth century. The Reformers taught that the Bible can be divided into law and gospel. These two elements are intertwined throughout Scripture and it is important to our understanding of the Bible to be able to distinguish between them. The law is everything that the Bible says about what God expects of us, those elements which point up our shortcomings or sins. It emphasizes God's judgment of our actions. The gospel (meaning, the "good news") is everything that God has done for us, in creation, in providing for our needs, in caring for His people — primarily in the work of redemption which Christians believe culminates in the sending of His Son to be our Saviour. If you read your Bible keeping this idea in mind you will see this double theme of law and gospel recurring throughout.

Other Themes

There are many other themes that run through the Bible that can be discovered, such as: Grace, Faith, and Judgment. As we read and study what God has said through the writers of the Scriptures, we begin to understand Him and His purpose for our lives. And we begin to see the unifying elements that tie all of the books together into one whole.

We can see another unifying fact in the Bible if we consider the special way in which the writers of various books were "inspired of God." The Bible makes this claim for itself in several places such as I Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired of God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness." Scholars have had a difficult time explaining *how* God inspires and they differ in their interpretation of this, but they do agree that it is "inspired" (the Greek work meaning literally "God-breathed").

2. Versions of the English Bible

The reader of the Bible today is fortunate that there are so many different English translations available. At the same time this may be a bit confusing. Why so many versions? It's a fascinating story. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, the languages of the people for whom they were first intended. Eventually, the Scriptures were translated into Latin, the language of the church and a more or less universal language of the scholars of the Middle Ages. It was not until comparatively modern times (the last four or five centuries) that the Bible was put into the languages spoken by the people. Even then the number of different versions was comparatively few. It is only in the latter part of the twentieth century that the English versions have proliferated.

Reading the Bible in more than one translation and making comparisons of language and interpretation is not only an exercise in linguistics, it will help you get at the original meaning and also bring the passage being read into focus in concepts and words that are meaningful today.

The congregational library can help its patrons understand the Bible and its message by having several modern English versions on its shelves. A single copy of a version might remain in the reference section for reading and study only in the library, but the library can provide a real service to its patrons by providing additional copies of the most popular versions for circulation.

The Purposes of Bible Translation

One may wonder why the continual translation and retranslation of the Bible is being done by scholars and linguists. A good summary of the purposes of translation was written by Robert G. Bratcher in an article on "Englishing the Bible" in a 1979 edition of the journal, *Review and Expositor*. Dr. Bratcher outlines these purposes as follows:

- No translation is done in a vacuum, and all translations are influenced by and reflect the events of their time.

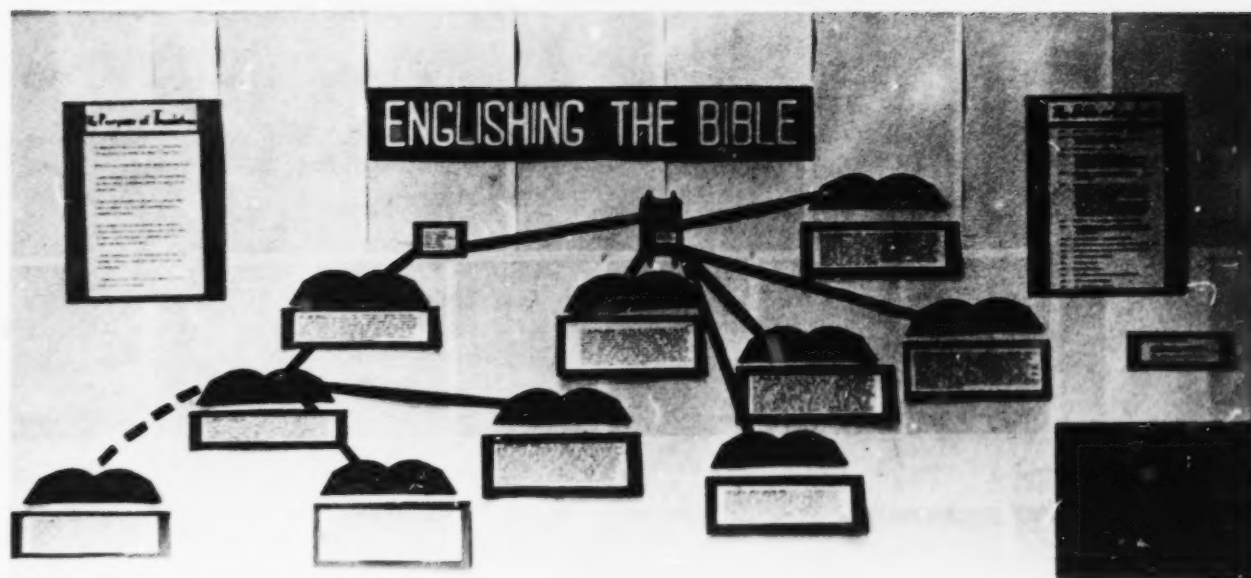
- Better editions of the original texts require new translations.
- A better knowledge of biblical cultures and customs permits the modern student to understand better the meaning of the biblical text.
- A more accurate knowledge of the biblical languages sheds light on passages that have been heretofore obscure or impossible to understand.
- Rapid changes in the English language itself require a periodic revision, if not a new translation, of the Bible in order to allow the reader to understand easily and clearly the meaning of the text.
- A better understanding of the translator's task makes it possible to produce a translation which is easy to read and understand.
- A translator's first, second, and last responsibility is to be faithful to the original.

Dr. Bratcher then goes on to state the dilemma of the Bible translator: "Translation is not only a science; but it is also an art. A translator attempts the impossible and knows beforehand that he or she is doomed to fail. For the transference of any written text from one culture and language to another culture and language inevitably involves a distortion, no matter how slight."

Early English Bible Translations

The translating of the Bible into the language of the day is not just a modern phenomenon in the English-speaking world. The following is a list of early English Bibles, those that predated the King James Version (1611) which is still widely used today:

- 1392 - **John Wycliffe** - First complete English translation.
- 1526 - **William Tyndale** - **New Testament**. It is estimated that 80 per cent of the King James Version is Tyndale's work.
- 1535 - **Miles Coverdale** - **Complete Bible**.



A bulletin board display showing the chronicle of the continual process of translating the Bible into English. It was prepared by Jane Lawton, periodicals librarian at Pitts Theological Library at Emory University in Atlanta.

1537 - John Rogers - Thomas Matthew Bible.

First Authorized Bible, composite of Tyndale's New Testament and Pentateuch, Tyndale's manuscripts of Joshua through II Chronicles, and Coverdale's Ezra to Malachi and Apocrypha.

1539 - Great Bible - Revision of the Matthew Bible by Coverdale. The 1540 edition is called Cranmer's Great Bible.

1560 - William Whittingham - New Testament, 1557, whole Bible 1560, known as the Geneva Bible. Printed in Roman type, this was the first Bible in English with verse division. This Bible became the Bible of the English People: Shakespeare, Bunyan, the Pilgrims, the Mayflower Compact, Cromwell, "The Soldier's Pocket Bible" (1643), the first Bible to be printed in Scotland. 140 editions were printed in over 100 years.

1570 - Bishops Bible - Revision of the Great Bible.

1603 - Two competing Bibles - Bishops Bible preferred by the Church authorities and **Geneva Bible** favored by the people.

Major English Translations and Versions of the Bible

The following list of the major translations of the Scriptures now available will be a guide. Each version listed has information about its sponsor and the dates of first publication. Most are available from publishers and bookstores in a variety of bindings and formats.

The KING JAMES VERSION (1611), also known as the "Authorized Version," was translated by a committee of scholars appointed by King James I of England. For more than 350 years it has been the most familiar, widely used and influential translation. The beauty of its English is unsurpassed but it is Elizabethan in style and the translators did not have many of the aids to understanding of the Greek and Hebrew texts that are now available. *The New King James Version* (1982), sponsored by Thomas Nelson Inc., is a revision of the King James replacing the "thees" and "thous" and other archaic English forms wherever appropriate.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION (1901). This is the American version of the English Revised Standard version of 1881-85 which was in itself a revision of the King James Version. A revision of



The Bible portion of the reference section in a congregational library.

this Bible, sponsored by the Lockman Foundation, *The New American Standard Version* (New Testament: 1963, and Old Testament: 1971) is based on the older version but uses many new materials and sources:

REVISED STANDARD VERSION (1946 and 1952; revision, 1971), a revision of the *American Standard Version* of 1901 using more recent Hebrew and Greek texts. Prepared by an ecumenical committee of scholars for the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. The revision, including the Apocrypha, received the endorsement of the Roman Catholic Church and is known as *The Common Bible*. *The New Revised Standard Version*, in preparation for several years, will be published late in 1990. With new manuscripts available, this version claims more accuracy than previous versions. Attention has also been given to euphony as well as clarity and lucidity to make it more suitable for public reading.

The NEW ENGLISH BIBLE (1961 and 1970) is an entirely new translation sponsored by the Church of England and a wide variety of religious bodies and (since originally published) endorsed by the Roman Catholic Church in Britain. The goal of the translation was contemporary English of literary quality based on the most accepted ancient texts.

THE COMPLETE HEBREW BIBLE, an English translation by the Jewish Publication Society is available in three separate volumes: *The Torah* (1962), *The Prophets* (1978), and *The Writings* (1982). This is an award-winning translation by distinguished Jewish scholars. A one-volume edition is also available.

The JERUSALEM BIBLE (1966-69) is a totally new translation by a group of Roman Catholic scholars at the L'Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem. The English translation is British, not American, but is easy reading and is published with useful introductions, tables, notes and maps. The arrangement of the books - occasional rearrangement of passages - is according to Roman Catholic usage. *The New Jerusalem Bible*, an updated version of this popular Bible was issued in 1988.

The TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION (1966-77), also called the "Good News Bible," was sponsored by the American Bible Society. Its purpose is to communicate in direct and simple language faithful to the ancient texts. It is widely read by young people and others who seek an entirely fresh rendition of the Biblical message.

The NEW AMERICAN BIBLE (1969-70) is the work chiefly of American Roman Catholic scholars translating from original Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew texts (thus not based on the Latin Vulgate as most earlier Catholic versions are). A style deliberately contemporary and American, it is approved for Catholic liturgy and mass reading.

The LIVING BIBLE (1971). This paraphrase, rather than a strict translation, by Kenneth Taylor has had a wide reception in the English-speaking world. An illustrated version, *The Way* (1972) received the official endorsement of the Roman Catholic Church.

The NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (1973 and 1978) is the result of a decade of work by a committee of over 100 scholars. It is a translation based on the best modern critical texts used in a scholarly and conservative way. It uses contemporary language but preserves the flow and texture of traditional language - a scholarly translation with great literary value.

The **READER'S DIGEST BIBLE** (1982) is a condensation of the Revised Standard Version. It contains all 66 books of the Old and New Testaments in their traditional order. Its main emphasis is on readability, and an introduction precedes each book. A 30-page Index enables the reader to easily find favorite episodes and passages. Ideal for those who have been daunted by the Bible's length and complexity.

Other Versions

The translations listed above are the major versions now in the English-speaking world. However there are many other lesser-known and more privately done translations which you may want to investigate to increase your understanding of the Bible. Such translations as those done by Phillips, Goodspeed, or Weymouth and others may be helpful. In addition there are some versions of the Bible done in dialects or with special audiences in mind such as the *"Cotton Patch Bible"* of recent years.

In addition to having several English versions on the shelf, copies of the Bible in the original Hebrew and Greek should be made available for patrons who are making a detailed study of any portion of the Scripture. If the patrons of your library are familiar with modern languages as well, you may want to consider having copies of these on hand for study. Information about the purchase of these Bibles can be obtained from the American Bible Society at its regional offices or its national headquarters, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

Further help on choosing a translation or translations for the congregational library can be obtained from any of the Bible societies and organizations listed in Chapter 5. One of the most helpful little books of information is *A Concise History of the English Bible* published by the American Bible Society (address above). It contains a complete history of the English Bible from its first translation in 1484, explanations of the purpose of each of the modern translations listed above, comparisons of the versions and an excellent bibliography on the subject.

A larger, more complete book about the versions of the English Bible is *The Word of God: A Guide to English Versions of the Bible* edited by Lloyd R. Bailey, John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1982.

Special Editions of the Bible

In addition to having several different translations of the Bible available, the congregational library should have several "Study Bibles" available for their patrons. These come in many of the versions listed above and can be found in your denomination or faith group's supplier catalog. You will also want to get the advice of your clergy or educational leaders about the purchase of these study Bibles. To name just a few that you will find helpful: The New Scofield Study Bible, The Thompson Chain Reference Bible, The Amplified Bible, Parallel versions Bible, inter-linear Greek-English New Testament, a red-letter edition with sayings of Jesus printed in red, picture Bibles for children, a harmony of the Gospels, and many more. Study the resources carefully and get all the help that you can before you purchase any of these special Bibles.

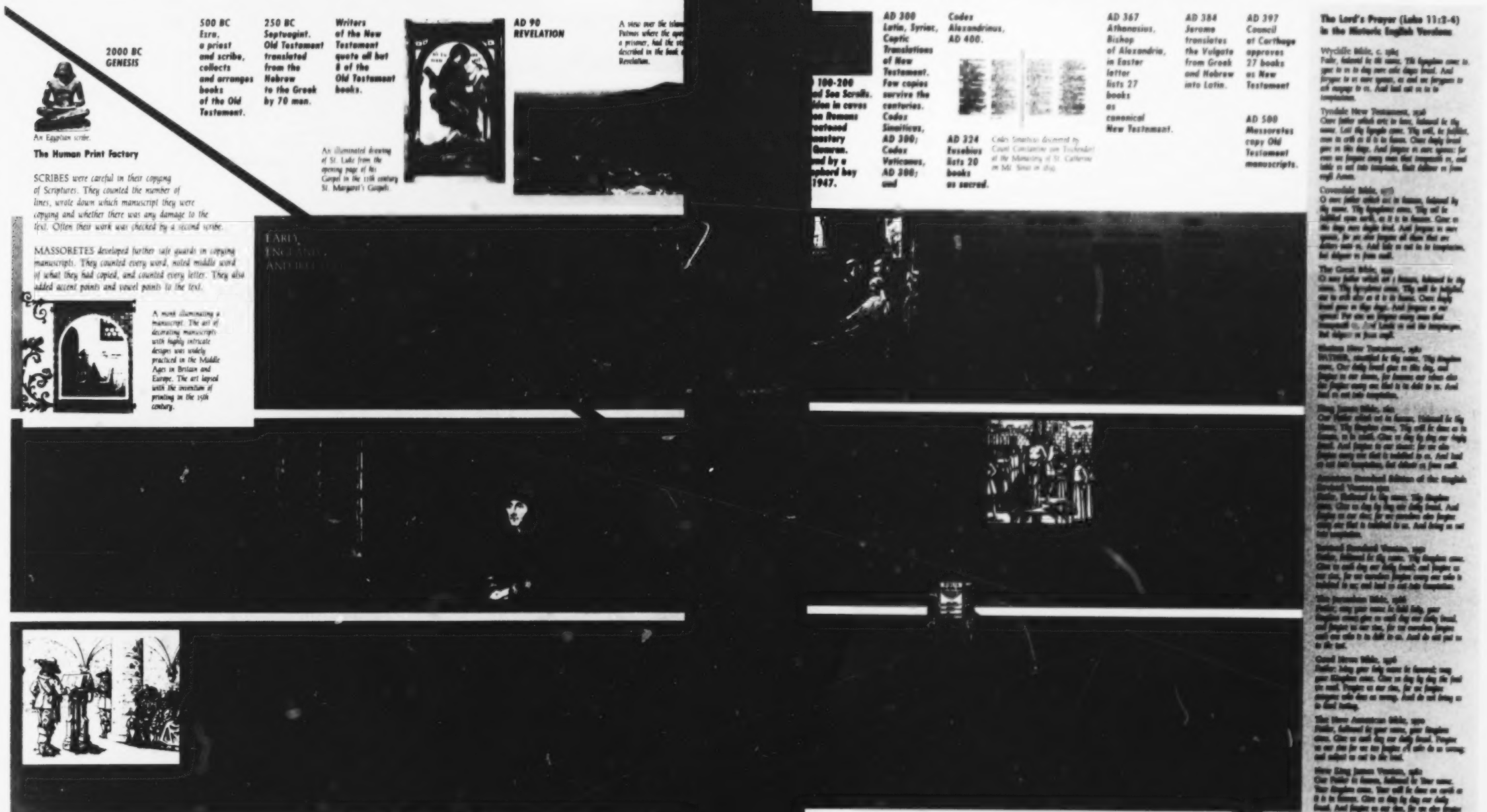


The New Scofield Study Bible. Photo published by permission of World Bible Publishers, Inc.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,
and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for
correction, for instruction in righteousness.
—2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV

HOW THE BIBLE CAME TO US

"If God spare my life, ere many years I will
show a boy that doth the plough shall know
more of the Scripture than thou dost."
—WILLIAM TYNDALE TO CHURCH LEADERS



A NEW AGE	1901 American Standard Version.	1904 The Twentieth Century New Testament.	1931 Smith-Goodspeed Bible.	1935 The Authorized New Testament.	1950 Phillips' The New Testament in Modern English. This paraphrase was started during World War II when Dr. J.B. Phillips served as an air raid broadcaster in London.	1959 Barclay Bible.
1863 Robert Young's Literal Translation of the Bible.	1901 The Emphasized Bible.	1917 Jewish Publication Society Old Testament.	1949 The Bible in Basic English.	1957 Lamon's The Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts. (translated from Aramaic texts)	1965 The Amplified Bible.	1966 The Jerusalem Bible (Catholic) from the Vulgate.
1876 Julia A. Smith's The Holy Bible.	1903 Weymouth's New Testament in Modern Speech.	1924 Century New Testament.	1949 Ronald Knox Version. (Catholic)	1952 Revised Standard Version. New Testament revised 1971.	1967 The New Jerusalem Bible.	
1885 Revised Version. (British)		1926 Moffatt Bible.				

Dr. J.B. Phillips, whose paraphrase of Bible books has been very popular.



How the Bible Came to Us, a 22 x 17" full-color chart showing the history of the Bible and its translations from the original manuscripts

ern day versions, published by Thomas Nelson, Inc., and available free by writing to P.O. Box 14100, Nashville, TN 37214-1000

3. Reading and Studying the Bible

In line with the purpose to serve and supplement the program of the congregation, librarians will seek to help patrons read and use the Bible. They will seek to find new and innovative ways to stimulate Bible reading by individuals as well as coordinating resources into the Bible study program of the congregation. Material in this chapter suggests ways in which this can be accomplished and provides materials that can be used in the process.

Photo copies of portions of this chapter could be made available to library patrons.

Understanding the Bible's Message

If the Spirit of God guided those who wrote the Word, and if He promised to guide those who read it, why are there so many different interpretations of the Bible?

First, we should realize that there are not nearly as many interpretations of the essential doctrines of the Bible as we sometimes are led to believe. Through the years Christians and Jews have learned to concentrate on the large areas of agreement rather than on the comparatively few differences.

As we study the Bible and ask "what is it saying to us?" we should approach it in the following sequence if we hope to achieve a proper understanding of any particular book or text:

1. *Understand it literally.* Start with the simplest interpretation. Take the Bible for what it says, just as it is, and branch out from there to other interpretations.

2. *Understand it linguistically.* Remember that the Bible, like all writing, loses something in translation. Therefore the English may not always express exactly what the original language intended.

3. *Understand it as literature.* Some of the Bible is poetry, for example, and should be seen as such. Remember "poetic license" from your school days? Keep the literary form of each book or passage in mind as you read.

4. *Understand it historically.* Interpret a passage in the light of what it meant in the historical situation in which it was written. This may throw new light on certain Bible verses.

5. *Understand it in relation to the central teachings of Scripture.* This is perhaps the most important principle. In other words, let the Bible interpret itself, for as you compare one passage with another and with the important central doctrines, obscure passages begin to take on meaning.

Reading the Bible for Meaning

As you read the Bible, you are looking for guidance and inspiration for your own daily life. It is helpful, therefore, to ask yourself these three questions as you read:

What does it say? (That is, be sure you understand the meaning of the words used. Sometimes a dictionary or Bible dictionary can aid you.)

What does it mean? (This is where some background information may be helpful. See the list of resources elsewhere in this booklet. Noting what comes before and after the particular passage you are reading will often help as well.)

What does it mean to me? (Bible reading is not an end in itself. It should effect a change in the reader — a change in thinking and attitude — or lead to action.)

How to Enjoy Reading the Bible

Year after year the Bible continues to be the world's best selling book, yet most people would admit that they don't read their Bibles as much as they would like.

Why?

It's too difficult, some say. After all, don't learned professors argue vehemently over its meaning?

The Bible is often confusing, and though we hesitate to say so, often dry. One doesn't read much of the Bible before encountering the "begats" — the list of descendants. If you read through Genesis and launch into Exodus and Leviticus, you eventually bog down in a seemingly endless recital of detailed laws.

Even the Bible's usually black cover is forbidding. And the quaint language and small print, lined up in verses, doesn't invite casual reading.

But, if in spite of all this your instincts tell you that it would be beneficial for you to read the Bible, take hope. Bible reading isn't as difficult as it at first may seem.

The following very practical suggestions about how to enjoy reading the Bible come from Rolf Aaseng, a scholar and missionary who has spent many years teaching and writing about the Bible — most recently with young Christians in Africa:

"Get an edition that is easy to read. This means the type should be large enough to see without straining. Although it is almost impossible to find a Bible without verse markings, try to purchase one that minimizes the numbers and has the appearance of an ordinary book — with paragraphs, indentations for poetry, and perhaps some illustrations.

You don't have to start at the beginning and read straight through. Begin with a part of the Bible that seems interesting and somewhat familiar. For most people this probably means one of the Gospels. Mark will appeal to people who like few words but a lot of action. Luke is a favorite of many who enjoy good writing. John may be of special interest to persons with a reflective or philosophical mind.

The Acts of the Apostles, another book of action, may be a good follow-up to the Gospels. Then try Genesis and the first part of Exodus. After that, it depends on your interests. If you want to understand more about the Christian faith, read some New Testament Epistles. Begin with a short one like I John or Philippians or Ephesians.

If you like adventure stories, you will find many in Joshua, Judges, the two books of Samuel, and both books of Kings. In these you'll read how Joshua fought the battle of Jericho and about the experiences of Samson, David, Elijah, and other heroes.

If you come across paragraphs or chapters that seem dull or confusing, it's no sin to skip them. Instead, read a section that seems more important. Other interesting stories are to be found in the Books of Esther, Ruth, and part of Daniel.

Do you enjoy poetry or are you looking for uplifting devotional literature? Try some of the Psalms. Are you interested in social problems? Sample Amos or another of the Prophets.

The books of the Bible are varied. Not all of them are valuable for every person in every circumstance. Concentrate on what speaks to your interests.

Read for meaning. Some people find it helpful to read one or several chapters a day. You may find it of greater value to read until you complete an episode or a train of thought, or until you find a particularly striking statement. After all, the chapter divisions are not inspired; often they are poor division points.

As you read, try to place yourself in the setting in which the books were written. Remember, they were

written for people of a much different culture from ours. An awareness of this may help. But if you can learn something about that culture, it might help you to get more out of your reading.

To be sure, neither we nor the most astute theologians are likely ever to understand everything in the Bible. Mark Twain is supposed to have remarked, "It isn't the part I can't understand that bothers me. It's the parts I do understand."

The Bible is a rich storehouse waiting to share its treasures with anyone who will come to it. Happy reading!"

A Bible Reading Plan

Reading the Bible through from cover to cover is not the best way to begin. Other suggestions are made above. However, at some point if you want to acquaint yourself with the whole of the Scriptures, you may want to follow some plan such as the following which will take you through the Bible in a year and still give you variety in your reading between the Old and New Testaments without losing the continuity of revelation.

As will be noted, this plan calls for reading the Old Testament through once and the New Testament twice in one year. (The New Testament books are read on alternate, even-numbered weeks.)

Order of Reading

- First Week: *Genesis*
- Second Week: *Matthew*
- Third Week: *Exodus*
- Fourth Week: *Mark*
- Fifth Week: *Leviticus*
- Sixth Week: *Luke*
- Seventh Week: *Numbers*
- Eighth Week: *Luke*
- Ninth Week: *Deuteronomy*
- Tenth Week: *John*
- Eleventh Week: *Joshua, Judges*
- Twelfth Week: *Acts*
- Thirteenth Week: *Ruth, I Samuel*
- Fourteenth Week: *Romans*
- Fifteenth Week: *II Samuel*
- Sixteenth Week: *I & II Corinthians*
- Seventeenth Week: *I Kings*
- Eighteenth Week: *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians*
- Nineteenth Week: *II Kings*

Twentieth Week: *I & II Thessalonians*
I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon
 Twenty-first Week: *II Chronicles*
 Twenty-second Week: *Hebrews, James*
 Twenty-third Week: *II Chronicles*
 Twenty-fourth Week: *I & II Peter,*
I & II & III John, Jude

 Twenty-fifth Week: *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*
 Twenty-sixth Week: *Revelation*
 Twenty-seventh Week: *Job*
 Twenty-eighth Week: *Matthew*
 Twenty-ninth Week: *Psalms*

Thirtieth Week: *Matthew or John*
 Thirty-first Week: *Psalms*
 Thirty-second Week: *Mark*
 Thirty-third Week: *Psalms*
 Thirty-fourth Week: *Luke*

Thirty-fifth Week: *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes,*
Song of Solomon
 Thirty-sixth Week: *John*
 Thirty-seventh Week: *Isaiah*
 Thirty-eighth Week: *Acts*
 Thirty-ninth Week: *Isaiah*

Fortieth Week: *Romans*
 Forty-first Week: *Jeremiah*
 Forty-second Week: *I & II Corinthians*
 Forty-third Week: *Jeremiah, Lamentations*
 Forty-fourth Week: *Galatians,*
Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians

Forty-fifth Week: *Ezekiel*
 Forty-sixth Week: *I & II Thessalonians,*
I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon
 Forty-seventh Week: *Daniel*
 Forty-eighth Week: *Hebrews, James*
 Forty-ninth Week: *Hosea, Joel, Amos,*
Obadiah, Jonah, Micah

Fiftieth Week: *I & II Peter,*
I & II & III John, Jude
 Fifty-first Week: *Nahum, Habakkuk,*
Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah
 Fifty-second Week: *Revelations*

Where do I Find it in the Bible?

The following collection of references, although by no means exhaustive, tells where to find many of the Bible's best loved and most often sought passages. This list is condensed from a pamphlet by the same name published by the American Bible Society and used with their permission.

EARLY BEGINNINGS

Creation	Genesis 1:1-3, 24
Noah and the Flood	Genesis 6:1-9:17
The Tower of Babel	Genesis 11:1-9
The Call of Abraham	Genesis 12:1-9
The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah	Genesis 19:1-28
Abraham's Offering Of Isaac	Genesis 22:1-19
The Story of Jacob	Genesis 25:19-35:29
The Story of Joseph	Genesis 37:1-50
Moses: In Egypt	Exodus 1-14
Moses: Wilderness Wanderings	Exodus 15:22-26, 31: 18-34, 35
	Numbers 20:21, 25
The Ten Commandments	Exodus 20: 1-17
	Deuteronomy 5:1-21

NATIONAL HISTORY

The Story of Ruth	Ruth 1-4
The Story of Samuel	I Samuel 1-3; 7-10; 12; 15; 16
Saul, the First King	I Samuel 8-11; 13; 15; 28; 31
David, the Shepherd King	I Samuel 16-27; 29-30; 25
	II Samuel 9; 11; 12; 15:1-18; 18
	I Kings 1:1-31; 2:1-11
King Solomon	I Kings 2:12-11:43
Elijah, great Prophet	I Kings 17-19; 21:11 Kings 1
Elisha, His Successor	II Kings 2; 4-6; 13:14-21
Nehemiah: Heroic Builder	Nehemiah 1; 2; 4
Esther: Queenly Heroine	Esther 1:9-7:10
Daniel	Daniel 5; 6
Jonah, Reluctant Missionary	Jonah 1-4

THE LIFE OF JESUS

The Birth of Jesus	Matthew 1:18-2:15 Luke 1:5-2:40
The Young Jesus	Luke 2:41-52
The Baptism of Jesus	Matthew 3 Mark 1:1-11
	Luke 3:21, 22
The Temptation of Jesus	Matthew 4:1-11
	Mark 1:12, 13 Luke 4:1-13
The "Sermon on the Mount"	Matthew 5-7 Luke 6:20-49

MIRACLES OF JESUS

The Healing of a Leper	Matthew 8:1-4 Mark 1:40-45/Luke 5:12-16
The Centurion's Servant	Matthew 8:5-13/Luke 7:1-10
The Calming of the Tempest	Matthew 8:23-27 Mark 4:35-41/Luke 8:22-25
The Man with the Palsy	Matthew 9:1-8 Mark 2:1-12/Luke 5:17-26
The Daughter of Jairus and the Woman with an Issue	Matthew 9:18-26 Mark 5:21-43/Luke 8:40-56
The Two Blind Men	Matthew 9:27-31
The Feeding of the Five Thousand	Matthew 14:13-23 Mark 6:30-46 Luke 9:10-17/John 6:1-15
The Boy Possessed of a Devil	Matthew 17:14-21 Mark 9:14-29/Luke 9:37-43
The Deaf and Dumb Man	Mark 7:31-37
The Draught of Fishes	Luke 5:1-11
The Widow's Son	Luke 7:11-17
The Ten Lepers Cleansed	Luke 17:11-19
The Water at Cana	John 2:1-11
The Nobleman's Son	John 4:46-54
The Raising of Lazarus	John 11:1-46

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

The Grain of Mustard Seed	Matthew 13:31, 32 Mark 4:30-32/Luke 13:18-19
The Sower	Matthew 13:1-23 Mark 4:1-20/Luke 8:1-15
The Tares	Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
The Leaven	Matthew 13:33/Luke 13:20, 21
The Found Treasure	Matthew 13:44
The Precious Pearl	Matthew 13:45, 46
The Unmerciful Servant	Matthew 18:23-35
The Laborers in the Vineyard	Matthew 20:1-16
The Two Sons	Matthew 21:28-32
The Vineyard	Matthew 21:33-46 Mark 12:1-11/Luke 20:9-19
The Marriage Feast	Matthew 22:1-14/Luke 14:15-24
The Ten Virgins	Matthew 25:1-13
The Talents	Matthew 25:14-30
The Sheep and the Goats	Matthew 25:31-46
The Two Debtors	Luke 7:36-50
The Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-37
The Rich Fool	Luke 12:16-21
The Lost Sheep	Luke 15:3-7
The Lost Money	Luke 15:8-10
The Prodigal Son	Luke 15:11-32
The Dishonest Steward	Luke 16:1-13
The Rich Man and Lazarus	Luke 16:19-31
The Pharisee and the Publican	Luke 18:9-14

JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Entry into Jerusalem	Matthew 21:1-11/Mark 11:1-11 Luke 19:29-44/John 12:12-19
The Last Supper	Matthew 26:17-35 Mark 14:12-26/Luke 22:1-38

The Agony in Gethsemane	Matthew 26:36-46 Mark 14:32-42/Luke 22:39-46
The Crucifixion	Matthew 26:47-27:66 Mark 14:43-15:47 Luke 22:47-23, 56/John 18: 19
The Resurrection	Matthew 28:1-10/Mark 16 Luke 24:1-12/John 20
The Ascension	Acts 1:1-12

POEMS AND SONGS OF THE BIBLE

Moses' Song of Deliverance	Exodus 15:1-19
The Song of Deborah	Judges 5:1-31
The Song of Hannah	I Samuel 2:1-10
David's Lament	II Samuel 1:17-27
David's Song of Victory	II Samuel 7:18-29
David's Song of Deliverance	II Samuel 22
The Symphony of the Heavens	Psalms 8
The Lord, My Shepherd and Host	Psalms 23
The Entrance of the King	Psalms 24
God's Beauty in the Morning	Psalms 27
God's Care	Psalms 37
An Anthem of Hope	Psalms 42
Confidence in God's Present Help	Psalms 96
The Protection of the Man Who Trusts	Psalms 91
A Song for the Sabbath Day	Psalms 92
God's Voice Today	Psalms 95
Glory to God	Psalms 96
The Wonderful Acclaim of the World	Psalms 98
A Challenge of Righteous Rule	Psalms 98
Enter His Gates Singing	Psalms 100
Thanksgiving to God	Psalms 103
Creator, Provider, Sustainer	Psalms 104
Vows of Thanksgiving	Psalms 107
An Elegy to the Nation	Psalms 137
All Nature Sings	Psalms 148
The Magnificat of Mary	Luke 1:46-55
The Benedictus	Luke 1:68-79
The Nunc Dimittis	Luke 2:29-32

PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE

Solomon's Personal Prayer	I Kings 3:5-10
Solomon's Public Prayer	I Kings 8:22-61
Hezekiah's Temple Prayer	II Kings 19:15-20
David's Prayer of Thanksgiving	I Chronicles 29:10-19
A Morning Insight	Psalms 5
The Searcher of Hearts	Psalms 7
Practicing the Presence	Psalms 16
Praise to Him	Psalms 22
Hungry for God's Intimacy	Psalms 25
Helped and Rejuvenated	Psalms 28
In God's Hand	Psalms 31
Wait for God	Psalms 42
A Cry for Cleansing and Pardon	Psalms 51
God Upholds My Soul	Psalms 54
Cast Thy Burden	Psalms 55

In Grave Peril	Psalm 57
Shelter in God	Psalm 61
Thirsty for God	Psalm 63
An Appeal for Help	Psalm 64
God's Blessing	Psalm 67
Seeing God's Hand	Psalm 71
Expecting a Gracious Sign	Psalm 86
God, Our Eternal Home	Psalm 90
A Cry Out of the Depths	Psalm 130
Life Examined by God	Psalm 139
Satisfied in the Morning	Psalm 143
Happiness from God	Psalm 144

Jeremiah's Prayer	Jeremiah 32:16-24
Daniel's Prayer	Daniel 9:3-19
Jonah's Prayer	Jonah 2:1-9
The Lord's Prayer	Matthew 6:9-13
Jesus' Prayer in Gethsemane	Matthew 26:36-44
Prayers of the Pharisee and the Publican	Luke 18:9-14
The Thief's Prayer	Luke 23:42
Jesus' Prayer for His Disciples	John 17
The Disciples' Prayer	Acts 4:24-31
Paul's Prayer for Believers	Ephesians 3:14-21
Paul's Thanks for Timothy	II Timothy 1:3-7

Great Chapters of the Bible

One of the favorite and very effective ways of studying the Bible is to concentrate on one chapter at a time, seeking to determine God's message from this portion of Scripture. The following list of twelve chapters to be used in this way was prepared by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, author, pastor, publisher, and made available in a little book called: *Let the Bible Help You*. The booklet is available from The Foundation for Christian Living, Pawling, New York, 12564.

The Bible is a book of faith, the history of God's dealing with human beings. These chapters were chosen for reading and study to show how God helps an individual meet the needs of daily life.

Joshua 1	Secret of Courage and Strength
Psalm 91	Protection and Guidance Always
Isaiah 55	Living in Depth
Ezekiel 37	Hopes and Dreams Can Live Again
Daniel 6	Faithfulness Is Its Own Reward
Matthew 5	Description of the Christian Life
Mark 6	Amazing Things Can Happen
Luke 22	Weakness Can Become Strength
John 14	Formula for Comfort
I Corinthians 13	Love—The Greatest Thing in the World
Ephesians 6	Strength Wards Off Defeat
Philippians 4	Joy and Victory

4. Library Tools for Bible Study

Because the Bible is a somewhat complicated collection of books, most people who read and study it have found special tools for Bible study very helpful. These special tools include three basic types of books: concordances, dictionaries, and commentaries. Many Bibles contain some of these helps bound right into the book, but in most cases better help and more information will be found in separate books. It is suggested that congregational libraries have a selection of these on their shelves. Help in selecting the ones most suitable for each library can be sought from clergymen, or in the catalogs of denominational or faith group publishing houses, or in books such as CSLA's Guide No. 15, *Providing Reference Service in Church and Synagogue Libraries* by Jennifer Pritchett (CSLA, 1987); *A Basic Book List for Church Libraries* by Bernard E. Deitrick (CSLA, third revised edition, 1988); or in *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study* by Frederick W. Danker, (Concordia, St. Louis, MO, 1970), a book which helps you find ways to use the tools for Bible study which you have in your library. The following are types of books that you will want to stock for your patrons use.

Concordances

These provide excellent help in locating Bible references and in word study. Here you will find Bible words listed in alphabetical order followed by a listing of all of the passages in which each word is used. *Complete* concordances listing every usage of every word are extremely large books which only scholars need; a book listing the important words and important passages is all most readers need. These you will find in a concordance. Here's how it works. Suppose you want to find the verse "Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden." You will look in your concordance under "labor," "heavy" or "laden." You would probably not look under "come" since that word occurs so often that you would have to wade through hundreds of references to find the right one. In a concordance, passages are listed in the order of their appearance in the Bible, so it is a help if you have an idea of the book or section of the Bible in which the passage you are seeking appears.

Another use for a concordance is finding cross references that use the same word or words, or looking for

several passages that use the same word. This kind of comparative study is very helpful in understanding what the Scriptures say on a certain subject.

Dictionaries

Another very helpful tool for Bible reading and study is a Bible dictionary. There are several sizes and types and you may find at least an abbreviated one in the back of your Bible. This is an alphabetical listing of explanations of people, places, things, or concepts found in the Bible. A dictionary will give you much helpful background about people and places in your Bible.



Library tools for Bible study, housed in the reference section of a congregational library.

Commentaries

These books offer explanations of the background and meaning of the passages of the Bible, paragraph by paragraph. Looking up a particularly difficult or puzzling passage in a commentary will give you an understanding of the message contained in the Bible passage and help you to fit it into the total message of Scripture. There are many excellent one-volume commentaries on the market as well as some very extended ones that run to several volumes, many with a book for each book of the Bible.

Other Helpful Tools

In addition to the three mentioned above there are many other aids to Bible study. For example, most Bibles have footnotes giving explanations of difficult or confusing passages. Or these footnotes may contain references to other passages of the Bible on the same subject or using the same words. These footnotes are often helpful in understanding the meaning of a particular passage.

At some point in your Bible reading you may want to investigate the purchase of a special "study" Bible bearing such names as "reference," "topical" or "chain reference" Bibles. Each of these has special tools which help the student "search the Scriptures."

Most Bibles also contain maps which are helpful in locating the cities, regions, or areas written about in the Scriptures. You will likely find an Old Testament map, a map of Palestine in New Testament times, and perhaps a map of the journeys of the Apostle Paul in the back of your Bible. For additional and more detailed maps you may want to look in a Bible atlas in your church, synagogue or public library. Some Bibles also

include a summary of each of the books, that will give you additional aid in your reading and study.

Books of archeology or other Bible background and geography books will help you get a picture of what life was like in the times the books of the Bible were written.

Many churches and synagogues follow selected readings from the Scriptures for each week's worship service. These readings, sometimes for a series of three years, are found in what is called *lectionaries*. These lectionary readings are planned to give the worshipper an acquaintance with the important passages of the Scriptures. These books sometimes also suggest daily readings to go with the weekly lessons. You may want to get one of these lectionaries so that your Bible reading is coordinated with the lessons read and studied in your place of worship.

Books About the Bible

In addition to the specific types of books described above, the complete congregational library should have on its shelves many other books which help patrons understand and appreciate the Bible.

You will find many such books listed in CSLA bibliography, *A Basic Booklist for Church Libraries* and in CSLA's Guide 15, *Providing Reference Service in Church and Synagogue Libraries*. Two more excellent bibliographies of these books are available from the Laymen's National Bible Association, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 439, New York NY 10115. These two inter-faith lists were published in cooperation with CSLA, *Helpful Books for Bible Reading and Study* and *Children's Books for Bible Reading and Study*. Single copies of either of these pamphlets are available free from CSLA or the Laymen's National Bible Association.

Many other lists of books about the Bible are available from denominational and faith group publishers and religious book stores.

5. Other Bible Resources

Bible Societies and Organizations

There are a number of organizations whose purpose is the translation, publication and distribution of the Bible for reading and study throughout the world. Many of these groups have a long and distinguished history of service. Congregational libraries can contact one or more of these for information which they can provide or to purchase special or large print Bibles, tapes and records for those with impaired sight.

American Bible Society

Organized in 1816 this society's purpose is to "provide the Scriptures, without doctrinal note or comment, wherever it is needed and in the language and format most easily understood by the reader." Its work is supported by more than 90 denominations and religious agencies as well as individuals. The ABS played a large role in the formation in 1946 of the United Bible Society, an international organization made up of some 90 national societies. Scriptures are available through the ABS in four English versions and some 70 other languages.

The American Bible Society is active through the United Bible Society in the work of publishing the Scriptures in other languages around the world. The ABS also provides the Bible in Braille and large print as well as on tapes and records for those with impaired sight.

More information can be obtained by writing: American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

International Bible Society

This organization, founded in 1809 as the New York Bible Society, is also engaged in the translation, publication, and distribution of the Bible in various forms throughout the world. Much of its recent activity has been concerned with putting the Bible into new languages recently reduced to writing by such groups as the Wycliffe Bible Translators, the largest of the reli-

gious organizations involved in such language work. Information about the International Bible Society can be obtained by writing them at 144 Tices Lane, East Brunswick, NJ 08816.

Laymen's National Bible Association

This national interfaith organization of laity was formed in 1940 "to encourage daily reading of the Bible, religious education, attendance at houses of worship and Sunday Schools and to strengthen religious life in America." Since 1941 a major project of the Association has been the sponsorship of **National Bible Week** in November each year, during which time thousands of volunteers in all walks of life carry the message of the Bible to the nation in promotion of Bible reading and study. LNB also publishes literature related to the Bible and sponsors annual Bible reading marathons, a National Bible Week editorial contest and an annual Bible-related photography competition. Copies of literature and more information can be obtained by writing: Laymen's National Bible Association, 475 Riverside Drive (Room 439), New York, NY 10115. See Chapter Six for suggestions of ways that your library and congregation can participate in special ways in National Bible Week.



An assortment of tracts about the Bible available in a recent mailing from the Laymen's National Bible Association. For information about availability of other materials see Chapters four and five.

Opportunities for Bible Study

Most local churches and synagogues offer periodic opportunities for study of the Bible by those interested. Many have weekly adult Bible classes. Others offer occasional concentrated periods of study either on an individual basis or together with other congregations of their denomination or faith group. Religious publishing houses offer many different types of study courses for the use of individuals and groups. In addition, there are national non-denominational or interfaith Bible study opportunities of various kinds. Three of the most popular in recent years are the following:

Walk Through the Bible Ministries

Since 1976 when these all-day community-wide seminars began, thousands have spent a whole day or sometimes a weekend in concentrated study of the whole Bible. Under the leadership of trained teachers, the group "walks through" one of the Testaments or the whole Bible noting the high points and becoming acquainted in the short period of time with the entire Scriptures.

This organization has also recently expanded its ministry with a "Daily Walk" program designed to take individuals through the Bible in a year. Further information about the location of seminars and other materials available can be obtained from: Walk Through the Bible Ministries, 61 Perimeter Park N.E., P.O. Box 80587, Atlanta, GA 30366.

Bethel Bible Series

Begun in 1957 in Bethel Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin from which it gets its name, this specialized type of Bible study has mushroomed to become a world-wide study in which 9,000 congregations from more than 40 denominations have participated. These studies are designed for use in a local congregation but they are also based on a disciplined system of training of lay teachers directed by the Adult Christian Education Foundation, a non-denominational independent organization. More information can be obtained by writing: Bethel Bible Series, P.O. Box 8398, Madison, WI 53708.

Neighborhood Bible Studies

Neighborhood Bible Studies is a lay movement in which men and women reach out to others in small group discussion Bible studies in the "neighborhoods" where they live, where they work, or where they know people through social or sports contacts. Neighborhood Bible groups are not for experts, but for adults who are

interested in discovering for themselves what the Bible says. For further information contact: Neighborhood Bible Studies, Box 222, Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522.

Study of the Bible is a life-long adventure and programs such as those described here can be of great aid in the search for the message which God has for us in His Word.

Bible Collections and Exhibits

Not only is the Bible an exciting book, but the story of its publication and distribution throughout the world is a fascinating study that has resulted in a number of Bible collections and exhibits. Your library could sponsor a visit to one of these to enhance your understanding and appreciation of the Bible, and its message. Many of these collections are very extensive containing thousands of items. Some are private collections, but they are available for viewing by appointment. In addition to the ones listed below you may get additional information from the International Society of Bible Collectors or their publication, *The Bible Collector*, at P.O. Box 2485, El Cajon, CA 92021. Arnold D. Ehler is editor. Information on Jewish-sponsored collections and exhibits of Bibles and Bible literature can be obtained from the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1930 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103, or JWB, 15 E. 26th Street, New York, NY 10010.

1. American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway
New York, NY 10023
2. Studer Bible Collection
Associated Mennonite Seminaries
3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46514
3. International Bible Museum
215 10th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73103
4. "A Light Unto My Path"
an exhibit sponsored by Christian Science
Committee on Publications
One Norway Street, Boston, MA 02115
5. Don Heese
15 S. Reed Street, Denver, CO 80226
6. Walter A. Coslet
P.O. Box 6, Helena, MT 59624
7. Rev. Lewie H. Miller, Jr.
P.O. Box 17036, Greenville, SC 29606
8. Jack Polak
195 Beech Street, Eastchester, NY 10707

6. Promoting Use of the Bible

In earlier chapters of this guide, many ways have been suggested in which the congregational library can promote the reading and study of the Bible through its facilities and the tools for Bible study on its shelves. But there are dozens, if not hundreds, of ways in which you can supplement your basic program with other materials and creative ideas for promoting Bible use through your library. Some of these suggestions follow, but we urge you not to be limited to what you read here. Use your own library's and your community's and your denomination's facilities. And keep dreaming of new ways to make the Bible live through your library ministry.

Supplementary Material

Books, pamphlets, and bibliographies on the Bible are listed in earlier chapters. Send for these and make use of the tools which you can have on your shelves.

There are also dozens of organizations in addition to the major ones listed in Chapter Five that distribute materials about the Bible, many of which are free or relatively inexpensive. Get on the mailing lists of these organizations and know what they offer. The Laymen's National Bible Association, for example, does a mailing each year in preparation for National Bible Week, showing samples of new materials about the Bible that can then be ordered for your library and community. Some of these materials are published by the LNBA; some are gleaned from other sources.

A few examples of the kind of materials that are available either for your library's vertical file or for distribution to your patrons are: *Know Your Bible* by David Fant, a 32-page booklet to help you understand the Book of Books, published by the International Bible Society; *How the Bible Came to Us*, a 22" x 17" full-color chart showing the history of the Bible and its translations from the original manuscripts to modern day versions, published by Thomas Nelson, Inc., (see page 20); the annual *Daily Bible Reading Guide*, an eight-page bookmark size list of readings for 365 days of each year, published by the American Bible Society; a four-page pamphlet, *Use and Misuse of the Bible*, published by Augsburg Fortress Press; *Planning and Leading Bible*

Study, a 12-page leaflet, published by the United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership; and *The Most Exciting Book in the World*, a 16-page booklet about the Bible published by the Foundation for Christian Living. Addresses for these and other materials are found in Chapter Five of this guide.

Exhibits and Displays

The Bible affords dozens of ideas for exhibits and displays that can be carried out in your library to bring patrons into your facilities, and also help promote the use and study of Scripture.

If you have bulletin boards available, search through materials and use your own imagination in planning displays. You will get help in this activity from two CSLA Guides: No. 11, *Planning Bulletin Boards for Church and Synagogue Libraries* by Janelle Parish and Guide No. 2, *Promotion Planning* by Claudia Hannaford.

Whenever a new book about the Bible is acquired, use whatever facilities you have for displaying new materials. If you have several versions of the Bible on your shelves, plan a display with each version open to the same passage, probably a familiar one to your patrons, so that they can make comparisons. Members of your congregation may have special Bibles, old family heirlooms, or special picture Bibles that could make up a display on some occasion. Take advantage of special times in your congregation, community or nation for these displays. For instance, take advantage of the national publicity given to the Bible during National Bible Week (Thanksgiving Week) each year to plan your own display of the Bible. Some of the materials mentioned in the first part of this chapter can be used for Bible-oriented displays at this time.

National Bible Week

You may want to sponsor an observance of National Bible Week in your community. Or you may wish to plan this with other congregational libraries, or even

the public library since this is an interfaith observance. Send for suggestions from the Laymen's National Bible Association, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 439, New York, NY 10115. Since 1940 this interfaith group has sponsored National Bible Week throughout the USA and depends on local groups to foster these observances. You may consider sponsoring a Bible-reading Marathon in your community, or plan a display in some prominent location in your town, or get your mayor to proclaim Bible Week in your city. Dozens of good suggestions are offered by the LNBA.

Bible Materials for Distribution

Much of the Bible emphasis in the library will be coordinated with whatever Bible study programs are sponsored by your congregation. Keep yourself informed of which books of the Bible are being studied in your religious education department. Take advantage of the opportunity to prepare materials for distribution to these classes and sessions which call attention to the Bible materials available on the subjects of their study. You will not only be augmenting the programs of your congregation, but you will also be stimulating use of your library by patrons who might not otherwise darken your doors.

Note the suggestion in Chapter Three of this Guide to duplicate sections of that chapter which offers ways to obtain the most from Bible reading and study. Have some stacks of these materials on the check-out desk for your patrons to pick up.

Volunteer to bring copies of several versions of the Bible to some of the classes so they can compare variant readings of their lessons. Be sure that this is helping the teacher and is not taking time from regular class lessons or preventing the students from doing the required work.

Non-Book Materials for the Library

The congregational library should stock more than books among its resources for Bible reading and study. Consider maps, for instance, about the Bible and Bible lands. These will be of great help in the teaching of the Bible.

In addition, purchase some of the games, quizzes and other Bible activities available from various distributors. The best source of a list of these materials is a six-page flier distributed by the Laymen's National Bible Association entitled, *Bible Study With Fun and Games*. There you will find sources for Bible trivia games, Bible computer games, quiz books, crossword puzzles, Bible calculator games, Bible Lotto and many other types of fun activities that will stimulate Bible learning and appreciation.

Planting a Biblical Garden

One of the most fascinating projects related to Bible knowledge is a biblical garden on your church or synagogue property. Trees and plants in such a garden are those whose varieties are mentioned in the Bible (you will be surprised to learn how many there are) and those which will flourish in the climate of your congregation. Two of the most extensive gardens of this kind are now more than a dozen years old. One is located on the grounds of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (Episcopal), 1047 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10025. The other is at Temple Israel, Longwood Avenue and Plymouth Street, Boston, MA 02115.

Before you attempt to plant a biblical garden, visit one. Purchase one or both of the following books which will offer help in making your plans: *Your Biblical Garden: Plants of the Bible and How to Grow Them* by Allen A. Swenson, (Doubleday, New York, 1981, \$13.95); *Gardening With Biblical Plants: Handbook for the Home Gardener* by Wilma James (Nelson Hall, Chicago, 1983).

Bibles for the Reading Impaired

If you have a large congregation you may have several persons among your patrons who cannot read regular print or who are blind. For these persons you will want to acquire Bible sections in large print or on records. Braille Bibles are available. Inquire about these items at the American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023. For Catholic sources, send to the Xavier Society for the Blind, 154 E. 23rd St., New York, NY 10010. Jewish sources include the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1930 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103; the Jewish Guild for the Blind, 15 W. 65th St., New York, NY 10023, or the Jewish Braille Institute, 110 E. 30th Street, New York, NY 10016.

A Final Word

The Bible is revered as a library of inspired books by both Jews and Christians. We don't always agree on which books comprise that library of sacred writings that we call "The Bible," but we do agree on the necessity of these writings as the center of our faith. Congregational librarians, therefore, will want to make the Bible and books and materials about the Bible an important section of their libraries.

A recent publication by the Laymen's National Bible Association brought together prominent leaders in Jewish, Protestant and Catholic worlds. The following quotations are brief excerpts from what they had to say in the booklet entitled, *Three Preachers of the Word on The Word of God*.

#

"As we read and reread the Torah, we Jews are cognizant of the fact that, unlike all other volumes, the Bible is the one book that cannot be appreciated in a single reading. Both the lad who receives a copy of the Bible on his Bar Mitzvah and puts it on the shelf, and the bride who carries the Scriptures during the wedding procession and then packs it away, treat the Bible as a souvenir. But the Bible is much more than a gift item or even a book. A book can be treated as an ornament, but the Bible is an instrument. A reader can be charmed by a book, while a true student of the Bible uses it to chart his life's conduct. When Chief Justice Jay was lying on his deathbed, he was asked if he had a farewell message to his children. He responded by declaring, 'They have the Bible, don't they?'"

—Dr. Saul Teplitz, Rabbi at Congregation Sons of Israel in Woodmere, New York and Past President, Synagogue Council of America.

"The Second Vatican Council had a dream. A dream of every Catholic as a Bible student, of every Mass as a Bible class. As these post-Council years go on, that dream moves closer to reality.

We now have at hand many superb scriptural tools: several clear, accurate Bible translations, most of them with scholarly explanations; one volume commentaries on the entire Bible; an updated lectionary, actually a carefully planned Bible reading and Bible study course, which is shared with many other Christian denominations.

We Catholics need to use all available resources, to become a people who know and love the Bible."

—The Most Reverend John F. Whealon, Archbishop, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Hartford.

#

"Has God revealed himself? Yes, in many ways. I look into a telescope and I know there is a God. I look through a microscope and know there must be a God. For the eye, the universe is brilliant with light and color; for the ear, the universe throbs with sound; for the lungs there is pure air to breathe. God has made the earth a storehouse for food, to satisfy man's hunger. But man also has a deep hunger of the spirit and the mind, and God has supplied this need, too, by revealing himself in the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures.

We have a great deal of new knowledge in our day, but I know of nothing that has been discovered that can offer the world a better God, a better Savior, a better law of ethics, a better plan for the Kingdom of God, a better plan of redemption."

—Dr. Billy Graham, world-renowned evangelist.

CSLA GUIDE SERIES

- CSLA Guide No. 1 (Rev. ed.)—SETTING UP A LIBRARY: HOW TO BEGIN OR BEGIN AGAIN**, by Ruby S. Smith, 1987. 23p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-16-4.
- CSLA Guide No. 2 (Rev. 2nd ed.)—PROMOTION PLANNING ALL YEAR 'ROUND**, by Claudia Hannaford and Ruth S. Smith, 1982. 52p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-09-1.
- CSLA Guide No. 3 (Rev. ed.)—WORKSHOP PLANNING**, by Ruth S. Smith, 1979. 65p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-15-6.
- CSLA Guide No. 4 (3rd ed.)—SELECTING LIBRARY MATERIALS**, by Arthur W. Swarthout, 1986. 16p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-07-5.
- CSLA Guide No. 5 — CATALOGING MADE EASY**, by Ruth S. Smith, 1987. 40p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-25-3.
- CSLA Guide No. 6 — STANDARDS FOR CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES**, 1977. 20p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-12-1.
- CSLA Guide No. 7 — CLASSIFYING CHURCH OR SYNAGOGUE LIBRARY MATERIALS**, by Dorothy B. Kersten, 1977. 10p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-13-X.
- CSLA Guide No. 8 (Rev. ed.) — SUBJECT HEADINGS FOR CHURCH OR SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES**, by Dorothy B. Kersten, 1984. 36p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-14-8.
- CSLA Guide No. 9 — A POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL FOR CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES**, by Martin Ruoss, 1980. 13p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-17-2.
- CSLA Guide No. 10 — ARCHIVES IN THE CHURCH OR SYNAGOGUE LIBRARY**, by Evelyn R. Ling, 1981. 24p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-18-0.
- CSLA Guide No. 11 — PLANNING BULLETIN BOARDS FOR CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES**, by Janelle A. Paris, 1984. 48p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-20-2.
- CSLA Guide No. 12 — GETTING THE BOOKS OFF THE SHELVES: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR CONGREGATION'S LIBRARY**, by Ruth S. Smith, 1985. 40p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-22-9.
- CSLA Guide No. 13 — THE ABC'S OF FINANCING CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES: ACQUIRING FUNDS, BUDGETING AND CASH ACCOUNTING**, by Claudia Hannaford, 1985. 36p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-23-7.
- CSLA Guide No. 14 — RECRUITING AND TRAINING VOLUNTEERS FOR CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES**, by Lorraine E. Burson, 1986. 31p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-24-5.
- CSLA Guide No. 15 — PROVIDING REFERENCE SERVICE IN CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES**, by Jennifer Pritchett, 1987. 57p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-26-1.
- CSLA Guide No. 16 — THE BIBLE IN CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES**, by William H. Gentz, 1989. 26p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-27-X.

OTHER CSLA PUBLICATIONS

- CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE LIBRARY RESOURCES**, 4th ed. A CSLA Bibliography, by Rachel Kohl and Dorothy Rodda, 1984. 20p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-08-3.
- HELPING CHILDREN THROUGH BOOKS: A SELECTED BOOKLIST**, Rev. ed. A CSLA Bibliography, by Helen Keating Ott, 1979. 35p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-06-7.
- A BASIC BOOK LIST FOR CHURCH LIBRARIES**, 3rd Rev. ed. A CSLA Bibliography, by Bernard E. Detrick, 1988. 16p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-10-5.
- KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR'S FAITH**, A CSLA Bibliography, by Bernard E. Detrick, 1988. 16p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-19-9.
- RELIGIOUS BOOKS FOR CHILDREN: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**, Rev. ed. A CSLA Bibliography, by Patricia Pearl, 1988. 40p. Paperbound. ISBN 0-915324-21-0.
- THE FAMILY USES THE LIBRARY**, A CSLA Leaflet, 2nd ed., 1977. 4p.
- THE TEACHER AND THE LIBRARY — PARTNERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**, A CSLA Leaflet, 1978. 4p.

For prices and quantity discounts on all publications, write:

CSLA, P.O. Box 19357, Portland, OR 97219